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Marvellous Minden
Violet and Hazel paint cars at Rotary Fest in Minden on Saturday, Aug. 9. More photos inside this edition. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Fire chiefs join together for county ban

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

We all saw it coming.

As of Tuesday, Aug. 5, the four fire chiefs from across Haliburton County officially announced a total fire ban. "The ban is being implemented through a joint decision of the County's four Chief Fire Officials due to ongoing hot and dry weather," reads the statement presented last week.

"Hopefully over the course of the next week or so, we'll start to get some rain," said Minden Hills fire chief, Don Kruger. "We need at least one solid day of rain."

The hot and dry weather that's graced the Haliburton Highlands for the majority of the summer has played a role in the safety and security of fire usage. While Kruger noted that he has not received any wildfire calls in Minden Hills, he noted that Highlands East and Dysart have received a few.

"We take those calls into consideration," said Kruger. "We've mostly been getting phone calls about how we haven't had a ban until now."

Kruger noted that historically, the fire departments receive complaints around the fire ban when it's put in place, not the other way around. "People have been calling and telling us their lawns are burnt, asking why we haven't had a fire ban yet."

And while individual properties may seem scorched, Kruger noted that they have to take the entirety of the region into consideration when making these calls.

There are a number of factors that push through a total fire ban. One is based on information received from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). Kruger noted that the MNRF provides daily updates from around the region, and is able to equate risks versus rewards for fire usage.

Another factor is the number of calls the departments receive locally about fires. While locals and cottagers alike seem to be cognizant of the brittle landscape, fire calls are continuing to roll in where open fires are concerned. A total fire ban would mitigate these calls. "No outdoor burning any time of day or night," reads the press release. "Bonfires, fireworks, torches and the lighting of charcoal barbecues, as well as any other light sources that use an open flame, are prohibited. Cooking fires are also prohibited."

Haliburton County is not alone when it comes to a dry summer. Wildfires are raging across varying parts of the country, with Nova Scotia recently implementing regulations prohibiting hiking and camping in the woods in an effort to quell the ongoing fire risk. "I think it would have to be pretty bad to do that here," said Kruger. "If we get a good, prolonged period of rain, that would green things up here."

At the time of press, a number of wildfires are active in neighbouring communities, primarily in the City of Kawartha Lakes. One fire along Burnt River has had crews working on it since Friday,

see WILDFIRES page 16

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A Royal Canadian Falconry staff member poses for a photo with a Harris's hawk at the Haliburton landfill. /ADAM FRISK staff

Harmony and hawks: landfill pest control

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The Municipality of Dysart et al has several tools in its toolbox to help mitigate pests at the landfills in the area, including the use of birds of prey and some good ol' rock and roll in an effort to help prevent the spread of trash from outside the disposal sites.

On any given day gulls, crows and ravens are usually circling overhead or sitting perched on the open lid of a garbage container, just waiting to inspect that clear plastic bag that was tossed in with the others. But when a Harris's hawk is around, the landfill is a ghost town.

A Harris's hawk has been patrolling the Haliburton and West Guilford landfills for much of the spring and summer. The bird of prey and the Royal Canadian Falconry (RCF) were contracted to help mitigate the gull and pigeon population at two of the busiest disposal sites in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

The RCF and its birds of prey were brought in to help deter the gulls, crows and ravens at the landfills in an effort to cut down on the spreading of garbage from outside of the disposal sites.

"Those types of birds will get into the garbage and they'll spread it around, distribute it in forests nearby," RCF owner Amy MacAlpine said in Aug. 6 telephone interview.

MacAlpine explained that gulls are colony birds, they are very social and generally hang out and nest in large groups, sticking around their well established areas.

"We don't have the concentration of birds in Haliburton that we've seen in other areas, but the way gulls work, they're colony birds, they reproduce and we can see the colonies grow exponentially," MacAlpine said. "So it's important to keep it under check because a few hundred birds can turn into a few thousand pretty quickly."

This is the first year the RCF had been contracted with bird mitigation at the two disposal sites with the cost pegged at about $10,000 per site. The municipality also hired the RCF for its services in 2023 to help deal with the pigeon population, with the birds nesting in maintenance sheds.

"The program at that time was viewed as a success," Ashley Dembinski, the municipality's environmental manager, said in a telephone interview.

The municipality also uses a rather inexpensive way to help mitigate the bird and rodent population at the Industrial Park disposal site, and that's in the form of music.

"The music was continuously played because it would deter birds, mice, rats and other pests we had," Dembinski said. "It seemed to be working well."

However, the playing of music has been temporarily halted at the landfill as result of a complaint from a member of the public who didn't like the music being played while they were disposing of their household rubbish.

Dembinski noted that several discussions around the music will be taking place and the tunes will likely return at the landfill.

As for the birds of prey, they are brought to the sites several times a week, depending on the level of coverage needed during a specific time of year.

"We see seasonal behavioural changes, like the birds for instance in the spring are nesting, so they're busy brooding," MacAlpine said. "They're not in the garbage piles because they're in their nests, incubating their eggs.

"However, this time of summer the juveniles have learned to fly and then we tend to see a higher concentration of birds in the landfills because the young birds have figured out where the food is," she said.

It's also a learning experience for these young birds that have taken to the sky and to the landfills for the first time in their lives.

"They are also inexperienced, they've never experienced a bird of prey before. Many of the birds have never even seen one before," MacAlpine said. "So we kind of have to educate them and teach them that hawks are scary. It usually takes a couple of weeks and by the end of August the young birds usually have figured it out."

The landfill visits are spread out between April and October, up until the end of the migratory process. The RCF serviced the Scotch Line landfill in Minden last year and currently has contracts with other municipalities in the area including Muskoka.

The birds of prey program has been deemed a success by the municipality after having the bird population significantly reduced at the landfills.

"Staff has found it to be very successful," Dembinski said. "Initially when we started there were about 100 birds per site and now based on the logs at most six birds and some days zero. We are also seeing a decrease in nests.

"And the amount of garbage and recycling that's being scattered from them picking through the waste has decreased as well," the environmental manager said.

The birds of prey program will likely continue next year.

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Cycling for a cause; how one local found her 'why'

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

We all have our 'why'.

That purpose that drives us, that inspires us, that fuels us to keep going, to push ourselves harder, to keep moving forward.

For Haliburton County resident Katie Woodward, her 'why' is a little girl named Leah.

In 2023, just four days before Christmas, Leah and her family received a life-changing cancer diagnosis.

"I can't imagine that kind of news," said Woodward. And Leah was not the only one. Every year, 1,700 kids are diagnosed with cancer in Canada. "I needed to find a way to help," recalled Woodward.

Woodward has always been active. Her first love was for training horses, but once that chapter of her life closed, she turned to the trails, in a very different way. "I was looking for something to fill that gap," she said. "And we're very fortunate with our scenery here."

Once she started biking, there was no turning back. With a natural need for speed that had developed from years of skiing, Woodward found her passion in cycling. "I've been cycling for quite a while now," she chuckled. "But I thought that if I am doing it anyway, I should find a way to help others."

That's when she discovered the Great Cycle Challenge, a Canadian initiative through SickKids to fight kids' cancer.

For her first year, Woodward wasn't sure where to start, so she set a goal of riding 200 kilometres and raising $500. "It wasn't long before I surpassed that goal," laughed Woodward. "Our community is such a generous, supportive group."

That first year, she rode over 600 kilometres, and raised over $6,000.

Four years strong, she has now ridden 2147 kilometres, and raised $30,778 to allow the SickKids Foundation to continue their work in developing treatments, and actively finding a cure for childhood cancer. Woodward ranks seventh in Ontario for the Great Cycle Challenge, and tenth nationally.

In her second year of riding, while her purpose and mission felt strong, it became that much stronger when she met Leah. "She absolutely touched my heart," said Woodward. And now, thanks to the funds raised by Woodward on her journey, Leah has now been cancer-free for the past 13 months. "Our community is absolutely awesome," reflected Woodward. "I am so grateful for how they support the cause."

Woodward will be continuing her rides over the course of the month. To support her cause, visit www.greatcyclechallenge.ca/riders/katiewoodward.

Katie Woodward has dedicated herself to raising money for kids' cancer treatments by riding her bike whenever she can. /submitted

Art adventures

The 19th annual Tour De Forest took place the first weekend of the month, featuring 20 artists spread across 11 studios in Haliburton County. While the tour has wrapped up for the year, many local artists continue to open their studios to the public over the course of the summer. Right, artist Barbara Hart samples her painting. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Left, artist MoniqueVan Wel showcases her jewellery creations durig the annual Tour De Forest summer studio tour.

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She chose the cash!
Barbara Varty was the winner of this year's annual Rotary Car Draw. She opted to take the $40,000 instead of the car. Varty is a local and has been buying tickets for over 15 years. She purchased seven tickets for $100 from Rotarian Ursula Devolin.
Photo left to right: Ursula Devolin, Mike Landry, President of the Rotary Club of Haliburton, Barbara Varty, Maureen O'Hara, co-chair of the Car Draw, and Bob Bullock, Curry Motors Sales Manager. /submitted

Food banks band together for shared website

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

The food banks serving Haliburton County have joined forces to launch a shared website in an effort to make it easier for residents to find information and give support towards the services they provide.

The website, FoodBanksHaliburtonCounty.ca, was made possible as a result of a partnership between Minden Community Food Centre, Central Food Network and Haliburton 4Cs. The site details important information to the likes of food bank locations, service areas and how people can donate or get involved.

"By working together, our organizations hope to reduce confusion and improve the visibility of our services," Tina Jackson of Central Food Network said in a July press release.

The website was about a year in the making after having multiple discussions between the food banks during shared fundraising events like the MooseFM radiothon and the The Jump In The Lake Challenge."During those fundraisers we really started thinking about what does it look like for the food banks to have a united voice in the area," said Kat Schouten, Central Food Network's communications and donor engagement co-ordinator, in a Aug. 6 telephone interview.

With the help of the Haliburton County Development Corporation, which provided a local initiatives program grant, the food banks web hub started to become a reality.

"It was during those conversations that we got to start to see, when we were all around the table at the same time, just the magic of people coming together," Schouten said. "Being able to brainstorm together what it would look like to have a shared platform in order to communicate to say that the food banks are here for you."

The centralized website also highlights three ways the community can get involved with the organizations, and that's by donating online, donating food or joining as a volunteer.

"Food insecurity is only going up," Schouten said. "We have all seen more people coming through our doors so that means we need more resources to keep up with demand."

According to the HKPR District Health Unit's '2024 Cost of Eating Well Report,' close to 13 per cent of households in Haliburton County live on a low income.

"This website removes barriers and makes it easier for individuals and families to get the help they need more quickly and with dignity," Jean Munroe from Minden Community Food Centre said in a press release.

The website will also play an important role for the holidays, acting as a place for people to donate and to sign up for "holiday hampers" ahead of the festive season.

The food banks said as they move ahead, the website will continue to be a hub for shared communications for where people can find support and how people can get involved.

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United Church opens doors

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Some will say it's been a long time coming, but on Friday, Aug. 8, the United Church of Canada offered a historic apology to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the treatment they have received over the years.

"It is my sincere hope that the sacred call to love and know each other will continue, with the apology being a touchstone and marker along the way," shared Rev. Aaron Miechkota, Iridesce Project Coordinator and Apology Task Group member.

According to their website, the word "iridesce" expresses a vision of infusing the colours of the rainbow flag with the love and light of God into iridescent colours that seem to transform when seen from different perspectives.

> ***"Things have changed over the past few decades. But the truth of the past can sometimes sting."***
>
> — Reverend Max Ward, Highland Hills United Church

The Highland Hills United Church in Minden is taking active steps towards becoming a space where everyone feels welcome. /FILE

The special service was broadcast from Knox United Church in Calgary, and was available via Zoom for all to watch.

Local Reverend Max Ward of the Highland Hills United Church in Minden was eager to showcase the apology, and take the next steps forward as an open and inviting congregation. "We as a congregation have been on a learning journey for the past year," he said. "And a part of that journey is to become an affirming congregation."

To become associated with Affirm United - a partner of The United Church of Canada for the support of all gender identities and sexual orientations - Ward noted that there is a detailed process involved. "It takes time of discernment and study," he said. "We have to ask ourselves, 'how are we welcoming to everyone?' A lot of the times, not everyone believes the same thing."

But as Ward and his local congregation of nearly 100 have committed to, there's value in opening up their doors. "Lots of people say they are welcoming, but when it comes right down to how people are treated, maybe they aren't all as welcoming," said Ward.

When Ward first came to the community, he noted that it had just become legal for same-sex couples to be married. Personally and professionally, this never bothered Ward, but he noted that when he sat down with some fellow church members, they asked if he, as a reverend, would marry a same-sex couple. "Of course," he said in response. "But does your congregation know what?" they asked.

And that got him thinking. He knew he wanted to create a space where all felt welcomed and accepted. "Things have changed over the past few decades," Ward said, gratefully, noting a general air of acceptance for all sexual orientations. "But the truth of the past can sometimes sting."

That's why, alongside the historic apology from the United Church of Canada, Ward is dedicated to moving ahead - learning from the past to celebrate the future. "It's part of the United Church's efforts to follow through," he said. "To be publicly recognized as being welcoming."

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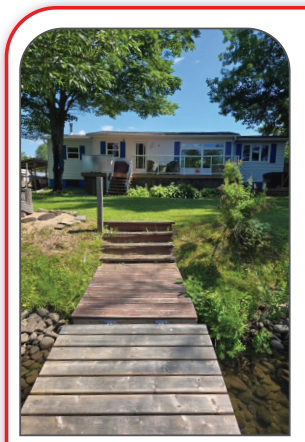

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Sorry

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

WE'VE ALL made jokes about it. The fact that we as Canadians have 'sorry' built into our daily repertoire, right up there with toonie and double-double.

We say it when we bump into someone at the grocery store, when we cut off a car even when we had right-of-way, when we accidentally step on an ant carrying a crumb to its family.

Sometimes we mean it as a surface statement. A filler in the conversation, a knee-jerk reaction to a spilled-over situation.

Other times, it needs to mean more.

The United Church recently issued a formal apology for its mistreatment of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities over centuries. For the way they've had doors slammed in their faces, the way they were taught they were not valid, the way they were made to feel like they didn't belong.

To this, the United Church said sorry.

The Highland Hills United Church, with Reverend Max Ward at the helm, was quick to open its doors in response, a congregation that has long welcomed everyone and anyone, even if the overarching powers perhaps raised an eyebrow. Kudos to Ward and the congregation of that church for allowing progress to take shape.

But what does an apology mean? Sorry is so often said on the surface, we rarely need to take a deeper dive into wading the waters behind the word.

Sorry means forgiveness. It means accountability. It means a dedication to action. It means admitting fault. It means doing better. It means making an effort to tie and weave the frayed edges of relationships, pulling the fabrics of a torn quilt back together.

In the 1980s, the United Church apologized for its role in colonization, and decimation of Indigenous cultures across Canada. By 1998, another apology was warranted, this time for the church's specific actions around residential schools, and the puppet masters who opened the doors of torture for innocent children in the name of a greater being.

Sorry, they said.

An apology can only mean so much. It takes the edge off the action, removes the shooter from their arrow, lowers their fists on the fight.

But the shooting has already happened, punches already thrown. Communities who took the beatings are able to resurface, but their faces are bloodied and bruised from years of bullying.

Indigenous communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, marginalized communities, It's time to come up for air. And I give credit to the United Church, and its efforts to move forward, while admitting their flaws of the past. There is hope.

But 'sorry' needs to come with a side of accountability. One word cannot bandage the bruises, but it can lay the welcome mat down on the door to the future. It can allow communities to perhaps feel that they could be safe, could be seen, could be celebrated.

One day, one day soon.

Because as we wade the waters of the word, sorry needs to hit deeper than the surface.

Restorative justice

Pair, Ponder

Poke, Peel

Fay Martin

IT'S HARD to feel good about how the justice system works these days. Predatory sexual behaviour that is inarguably bad is found not to be criminal. The system moves slowly and provides a good income for everyone but the objects of law. Sometimes the slowness rewards badness, when cases are chucked because they ran out of time – a stick intended to incentivize the system instead whacks victims. Convictions are as trustworthy as bunny-boiler Glenn Close's demise in a bathtub in *Fatal Attraction* – they seem to have innumerable second lives.

E. Jean Caroll won a heap of money from Trump but found the redeeming exchange in that lengthy court saga to be 'I lanced him in the eyes. He jerked and looked back at me. I said what I wanted to say to him with my eyes and he got it. Oh, he got it. Then I turned back. It was the most intense moment of my life. Trump never held my gaze again for the rest of the trial.' (Janet Somerville, *Toronto Star,* July 26, 2025).

Years of being eviscerated before the courts, two successful rulings, and E. Jean Caroll's winning moment is looking her enemy in the eye! It, not the $88.3 million in pocket, allowed her to reclaim herself: 'Here I am. Here I am,' she says, describing the impact of that eye contact.

So: let's think about an alternative way to seek justice when the crime is about what makes us who we are. The legal system shrinks people into three categories: criminals, victims, witnesses. No one is just any of those, and we are each all of those at some point and in some circumstances. What adjudication system might embrace that complexity? That liminal space where good and bad meet, where humanity lives and dies? Where good people do bad things and bad people do good things? Where proper punishment – think parenting, when we do this every day - nurtures and restores the wholeness of all the players in the event?

This approach was named and claimed as Restorative Justice in 1977, but was practiced by Indigenous communities in Canada and New Zealand for eons previously. It has been found highly effective, both anecdotally and academically, in resolving conflict.

Restorative Justice describes the problematic behaviour, the conflict, as harmful, rather than criminal. Criminal implies intent, which is slippery – it's a wriggling mix of logical and emotional 'thinking' at the best of times. Harm, on the other hand, is a personal perception. We ask; Are you hurt? How are you hurt? Where does it hurt? We acknowledge that the damaged person can best define the nature of the harm. To a large extent, we allow them to define what will repair the harm.

So if we apply that thinking to interpersonal interactions that cause harm - hopefully long before they reach a level where they might be adjudicated illegal or criminal – we sit together the person who was harmed and the person who did the harm, and a mix of people who observed the interaction or its aftermath, and we have a carefully focussed and managed discussion about what constitutes the harm, its root causes and ripples of consequences for all concerned, and what can be done that will repair to the best possible extent the harm that has been done.

Everyone has work to do in this situation. The harmed must articulate the nature and extent of the harm – no hiding in generalized victimhood. The harmer must articulate the thinking (or lack thereof) that produced the harmful behaviour and willingness and capacity to repair the harm – no hiding in silence as four of five accused hockey players did in their trial. The witnesses must take responsibility for what they did, did not, or could or could not in the future do to address the issue – no hiding in institutional crevices.

That is the kind of work that requires and creates community. It not only allows but requires direct gazing into the eyes of the other(s). Unlike E. Jean Caroll's experience, meaningful exchanges are witnessed and their consequences tagged for implementation, a tailored and personalized way to keep parties to an agreement 'accountable' (another slippery and increasingly mis-used word – topic for another time).

The restorative justice approach is not esoteric or weird: we do something that approximates it pretty much every day in our family, work and community life. It's what creates and incrementally strengthens the ties that bind – or breaks them. A recalcitrant, unrepentant, serial harmer will eventually be cast out of community. This is not a hug-a-thug strategy (as it was called in early days before it had a chance to demonstrate its efficacy) but an equitable resolution designed to help everyone to find their better selves. There is no external harm that doesn't also harm internally -- restorative justice is an equal opportunity healer.

There was an effective Restorative Justice mechanism in Haliburton County for a few years in the early 90s; maybe it's time to give it another go.

points of view

I'se the b'y

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

THE OTHER day a hard 12 o'clock deadline for another column I write was rapidly approaching. I'm pleased to say that I finished it right on time, at exactly 12:19, according to my computer's clock.

The funny thing is when I looked at my cell phone, its clock said 10:49 a.m.

Suddenly, I had to decide which clock to believe. The one that said I finished almost an hour and a half early or the one that made the most sense.

It seemed like an easy decision, except I knew cell phones clocks are never wrong.

So I had to concede that the problem was my computer. Then I opened the Settings page and soon discovered that my time zone setting had somehow been changed from Eastern Standard to Newfoundland time.

Right now, you're probably wondering, other than making you work 90 minutes ahead of time, does living in Newfoundland time affect you?

Aside from that one incident when I thought I would need two more guys to help me change a light bulb, no.

Still, there were nagging questions. Who had changed the computer setting? And why?

Luckily, years of watching TV detective shows finally paid off. For they taught me that before you label anyone a suspect, you need to ensure they have motive and opportunity.

So, I asked myself, who would want a column sent in on time or – God forbid – even earlier?

I was quickly able to rule myself out as a suspect.

Instead, I took a serious look at my editor. Editors always want columns sent in early. In my case, often weeks in advance.

The motive was strong. Opportunity, however, was a different matter. My editor does not have access to my computer – so I ruled her out.

With the two most obvious suspects off the list, I took another lesson from those detective shows and put on a trench coat. Then, I began looking at the one you'd least expect – in this case, my dog Rosie.

Rosie had a strong motive. If I finish early, we play fetch earlier.

She also had opportunity. She practically lives in my office.

The only issue is Rosie, like most dogs, is computer illiterate.

It then occurred to me that Rosie could have enlisted help.

So, I asked myself who else would want me out of the house early?

That's when Jenn said, "Steve, since you are finished your column, maybe you could get out of the house early?"

"Give me a minute," I said. "I'm trying to figure out a mystery."

"Well maybe you could solve it outside of the house, since your column is finished earlier than normal …"

I gave it some more thought, but nothing came to mind.

It didn't help that Jenn handed me my car keys, wallet and jacket and walked me to the front door.

"I have an online meeting," she said. "I'd like you out of the house early, so we don't have a replay of last time…"

She said that as if it were my fault that she set up her home office across from the washroom.

Her constant interruption, of course, didn't help me concentrate and solve the mystery of who set my computer's clock to Newfoundland time to get me out of the house early.

As of now, the mystery remains unsolved, though I am closely keeping an eye on both cats. The have a great motive. They love it when the dog is out. They also have opportunity. Oh, and here's the kicker, they know their way around a mouse

pic *of the* past

Rockcliffe Snack bar on the left, Taxi services on the right with a driver out front. It was recalled that the taxi was owned by James 'Jim' Miles at the time. Photo was from Aug., 1962. /photo submitted by Carol Simmons

Yoga in beauty

Tales from the great

Green meadow

Lynda Shadbolt

IF YOU have ever had a cat or a dog you will know that they love to do yoga with you. When you roll out your mat and get down to do some stretching, they will be right there beside you. They purr and roll around and often take up the whole mat. They love the vibe of the movement and the breathing and the quiet. And they love to be connected to their humans.

One of the memories I have from Covid was leading yoga classes on Zoom and everyone having their cat and dog with them. It was hilarious. We would all introduce ourselves and our pets as we started the classes. For many of us our furry family members kept us company during those months when we couldn't meet in person.

I love my cat and dog with all my whole heart. They bring me so much joy and good company every day. This is my third year being part of a team that is raising money to support the Brooksong Retreat and Cancer Support Centre. This year our team is called Furball Yogis and our team is made up of six cats and four dogs (and their humans) who have pledged to get on their yoga mats every day for 62 days to raise awareness and money for Brooksong.

We are having so much fun. In August our team is offering a couple of in person yoga classes, by donation to the Furballs. The first event is at the Haliburton Sculpture Forest this Wednesday, Aug. 13 at 5 p.m. The Haliburton Sculpture Forest is 24 years old! There are 1.4 kilometres of walking trails, plus 44 sculptures and six "one of a kind benches" to take a break on.

On Wednesday my friend Myra and I will lead a one-hour walk and yoga experience starting at the kiosk on the college side (Haliburton School of Art and Design). All ages and yoga experience are welcome. We will start at 5 p.m. and go until 6 p.m. Please wear running shoes and comfortable clothing.

A water bottle is always a good idea and no yoga mat is required. If you are bringing a Furball please have it on a leash. We will walk through the Sculpture Forest, stopping at a few sculptures and do some yoga, mindfulness and gentle centring exercises. Our intention with this hike is to welcome the participants to become present with all of the beauty and life that is around them. There is something really lovely about pausing, listening and breathing with the trees, the lake and the sculptures. We won't be in any hurry and it will be a lovely way to stretch in beauty. Our second event will be on Sunday Aug. 24 at the top of Sir Sams Ski Hill. We will gather at 10 a.m. and do some yoga with a beautiful view! Registration required for the ski hill event. For more information please email furballyogis@gmail.com. Donations can be made in cash, cheques made payable to Brooksong Retreat and Cancer Support Centre and online at brooksong.ca. The Furballs send their gratitude to everyone who is supporting Brooksong.

Abbey Gardens hosts inaugural Food Festival

Attention all Foodies! The first ever Food Festival will take place at Abbey Gardens on Saturday, Aug. 16 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. This new event, sponsored in part, by County of Haliburton Tourism, will be sure to delight your taste buds and quench your thirst all while supporting Abbey Gardens.

Come with an appetite! The Festival will be serving up food favourites with wood-fired pizza from Into the Blue, BBQ from Till Death BBQ, fresh bread baked, ice cream from Kawartha Dairy, and unique vendor treats. Boshkung Brewery will be offering their local craft beer on site and our own Food Hub will be selling coffee and baked goods, along with our café favourites.

"The launch of this new food festival presents an exciting opportunity to highlight the incredible local producers, farmers, and culinary talent that call the Haliburton Highlands home," said Angelica Ingram, manager of tourism for the County of Haliburton. "By celebrating our homegrown flavours and farm-to-table experiences, we're not only attracting visitors with a passion for food, but also building stronger ties between tourism and agriculture. This festival is a meaningful step forward in growing agri-tourism in our region and showcasing the vibrant food culture that sets the Highlands apart."

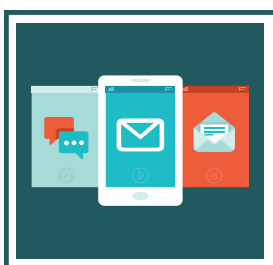
Enjoy family fun with Pockets the Clown, try your hand at our disc golf tryout area and visit our on-site heritage animals and play areas. Plus, shop from amazing artisan vendors like Malty & Hoppy Delicacy, Algonquin Craft Co, and Dainty Permanent Jewellery. Beach Party Boys concert is happening too, doors open at 4 p.m., show starts at 4:30 p.m., get your tickets before it sells out!

"We are excited to host our inaugural Food Festival at Abbey Gardens, and we want this to grow into a signature tourism experience in the County of Haliburton," said Angela Kruger, executive director of Abbey Gardens.

Entry into the Food Festival is by donation, with all proceeds going towards supporting Abbey Gardens environmental education and restoration projects. Tickets to the Beach Party Boys concert are $45.

Visit our website: abbeygardens.ca for more information and to purchase your tickets to the concert.

Submitted



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com

letters to the editor

Turtle facility versus medical facility

To the Editor,

Without a doubt there are hundreds of government regulations and standards that defy any kind of common sense or logic. Yet if there are no regulations to prevent a turtle sanctuary from moving into what has essentially been a medical facility for many, many years, surely common sense would prevail and another location could be found for the turtles.

Turtles and medical facilities require completely opposite environments and are not even closely compatible. Very expensive equipment in the dentist office is in serious jeopardy of being ruined by the very high humidity and temperatures needed for the turtles. The health of the staff and the patients are also in serious jeopardy.

It is time for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour to step in on this issue. The reality is these two very important enterprises should NOT be in the same building!

Jim Ellis,
Haliburton

Minden Memories

This 1920s photo shows the sluice below the Salerno Lake log dam at Irondale. Ned Hancock, seen near the end of the log run, kept logs from jamming as they entered the Irondale River. He was the grandfather of Claude, Edward, Wayne, and Robert Hancock. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week

"I LOVED this novel. . . . If you have ever sung along to a hit on the radio, in any decade, then you will devour Mary Jane at 45 rpm." —NICK HORNBY
mary jane
A Novel
JESSICA ANYA BLAU

1970s Baltimore. Fourteen-year-old Mary Jane is the picture of quiet, orderly living: bookish, well-mannered, and devoted to show tunes and home-cooked meals. When she takes a summer nanny job with a local doctor's family, she expects a respectable household.

But the house is cluttered and chaotic, soon hosting a famous rock star and his movie star wife as the doctor helps him dry out. Caught between the lifestyle she's always known and the future she's only just realized is possible, Mary Jane will arrive at September with a new idea about what she wants out of life and what kind of person she's going to be.

Mary Jane by Jessica Anya Blau is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. To place a hold or learn more, visit haliburtonlibrary.ca.

Helping out, one bowl at a time

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Legion President Mike Waller with artist Michelle Anton showcase bowls made by local potters for the upcoming soup fundriaser. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

It's a cause that will unite a community: food insecurity.

Across the country, one in every four households is navigating the challenges of bringing food to the table; a premise that we know is prevalent right here in our own communities.

That's why SIRCH Community Services partnered up with the Haliburton Legion Branch 129 to try to make a dent in the struggles with an upcoming fall fundraiser.

"It's amazing to see," said Legion President Mike Waller. "Last year was fantastic. It was overwhelming to see how our community comes together."

Now in its second year, the Empty Bowls Fundraiser partners with local artists, restaurants, and musicians to raise money and awareness around food insecurity. Last year, the event completely sold out, with folks being turned away at the door due to capacity limits.

"So we've gone bigger this year," said Michelle Anton, a volunteer with SIRCH and a member of the local Legion. "We've organized two sittings this year."

The premise of the event is to offer handmade bowls by local potters to all attendees. Folks can pick their favourite bowl, and taste-test a variety of soups provided by local restaurants. At the end of the night, they can take the bowl home to add to their collection.

With over 20 potters involved in the cause, there is a variety of styles, colours, shapes and sizes that attendees can choose from. "Everything has been donated," said Anton. "Including 60 gallons of soup."

Also on the roster for the evening are four great bands offering live music to add to the ambiance, as well as a silent auction to further garner fundraising efforts. "It's quite an event," said Waller.

The concept of the soup bowl fundraiser was started in the United States by a group of eager graduate students, looking to make a difference in their community. The idea snowballed across the continent, and has been practiced in neighbouring communities, such as Peterborough, for at least 25 years.

Locally, organizations have altered some semblance of the concept over the years, with the early events hosted at Haliburton School of Art and Design, but two years ago, the Legion took the lead as the hosts.

"It totally falls within our mandate of giving back," said Waller. "Anything we can do to help our community out, we will do it."

Anton, a potter herself and the secretary for the Legion, saw the combination of giving back under the umbrella of the organization as a perfect match. "I heard of the idea and said that I would like to take it on," she recalled, noting that she worked with fellow local potters to navigate the ins and outs of the evening, before fully committing to make it a popular event.

This year, the first sitting is set for 4 p.m., and the second will take place at 6:30 p.m., both on Sept. 20 at the Haliburton Legion. With nearly 50 volunteers participating to make the evening a success, Anton and Waller are eager to see how the event plays out, and are hopeful that they once again sell out. Proceeds from the event will go directly towards the Haliburton Food Bank and SIRCH Community Kitchen.

Tickets can be purchased at SIRCH or the Haliburton Legion, or through the Legion website.

"It truly amazes me to see what our community can do for those in need," said Waller. "The outpouring of love and compassion is just amazing."

Imagine the possibilities, says local drag king

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Sandy Joint is a local drag king whose first hosting event was in Haliburton. Joint hopes to encourage youth to be their authentic selves. /THOMAS SMITH staff

While Kris Hamill was adopted from Russia at the age of one and grew up in Mississauga, the Eagle Lake area has always been his second home. His grandparents lived in the Haliburton area his entire life, and his grandmother was a regular curler at the Haliburton Curling Club.

As an adult, Hamill performs regularly as a drag king, and goes by the name Sandy Joint.

"Sandy, like a beach, and joint, like my elbow," says Joint with a wink.

"We have been at the cottage every summer since I came to Canada," he said.

Growing up queer, let alone in Haliburton County, is tough for kids, says Joint.

His father, one of his staunch supporters, had aspirations to convert the family's cottage into a retreat for queer youth. As a firefighter, he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer and passed before he could achieve his dream. In honour of his late father, Joint donates money every year to the Youth Hub in Haliburton.

"I want to support the Youth Hub as much as I can," said Joint.

"As an only child, the only thing I had was my imagination and my toys to play with," he said. To keep him company, Joint's imaginary friends were characters he saw on the screen including Mulan and Mufasa from *The Lion King*. To him, they were his best friends.

It was not until he went with his aunt to see *Frozen*, when he realized the artistry that goes into animation. He was struck by the scene when Anna gets frozen solid and there is a close-up of a snowflake landing on Anna's cheek. To Joint, that snowflake was real. Later in life, he would go to college to study animation.

"My whole brain went to fireworks," said Joint. "I knew that I had to do this."

"I was going through my gay awakening," said Joint. "I was going through the feeling of being unwanted, to not knowing, to very confused."

Joint went into high school fully out of the closet, wanting to beat bullies to the punch. When he was 15, he came out to his mother as a trans man to which his mother did not initially believe him.

Around this age, Joint was forced to quit hockey due to relentless bullying.

Coming out for the second time at the age of 16, Joint started receiving gender-affirming care.

"My mother has been supportive ever since," said Joint. "I think it was just something she needed to sit with."

It was Joint's media arts teacher in high school that introduced him to graphic design, photography, and videography, pulling him out of his depression. His passion for photography led to him working as a drag photographer for Ocean La'Vodka Giovanni, a Toronto based drag queen. Quickly, Joint fell in love with drag as an artform for gender expression, creativity, and puppetry.

While performing, Joint incorporates his collection of puppets into his act. Ranging from dogs, to fuzzy monster creatures, he has twelve puppet pals to choose from to join him on stage. Playing with puppets since the age of 12, his puppets mean a lot to him and the song *"Man or Muppet"* from *The Muppets* is a staple to his act.

"I ask myself the question, what would you do if nothing was impossible and work backwards from there," said Joint.

Now a seasoned artist, Joint's makeup takes him 45 minutes to put on including base, eyelashes, lipstick, and eye liner. With a wig, extended moustache, and mascara to accentuate his eyebrows, Joint's staple look is combined with a wide range of costumes, from Perry the Platypus to Mrs. Piggy.

"When I step foot in town, people stop and stare all the time," said Joint "I see why, but it doesn't happen as often in Toronto."

While living in Haliburton County, Joint has received hateful comments out of drag.

"I definitely keep my head on the swivel," said Joint. "Even when in broad daylight, I get some looks."

In Toronto, he says that drag performers are often not noticed or out of place.

"People get really excited to see you," said Joint.

This June, Joint had the opportunity to walk in Toronto's Pride Parade. Walking in the parade, Joint was celebrated, cheered, gave out signatures, and took photos with many roaring and passionate fans.

"I had hundreds of thousands of people screaming at me," said Joint. "It was surreal having so many people so excited to see me."

Joint says that there is an oversaturation of drag in Toronto, where he performs regularly. More performers mean tighter set times and song restrictions. Performing in smaller towns like Haliburton is a real treat for him.

"I really live for the smaller shows like in Haliburton," said Joint. "You can be your little creative, queerdo self and people are okay with it."

"A lot of the audiences in the small town shows appreciate you so much more," he said.

Joint says that he can often earn double the amount of tips in small towns than he can in Toronto.

While not performing in drag, going to school, or doing the odd design freelance gig, Joint is also a professional hockey coach.

Playing with the Toronto Gay Hockey Association, Joint was awarded MVP after his team won the inaugural All-Star Pride Cup. Playing hockey three to five times per week, Joint has also coached Olympians, rep leagues, house leagues, and both boy and girl leagues.

"I can stop a puck," laughs Joint.

Joint first learned to skate at A. J. LaRue Arena, in Haliburton.

"We would come up here to visit grandma and we would go to the free skates," said Joint. "One day, no one was there and I was flying around the rink."

Initially performing as a drag queen for a hockey function, Joint hated being perceived as feminine.

"The dysphoria of being a drag queen and being perceived as female made my skin crawl," said Joint. "I hated it. I grew a moustache immediately after and it took me weeks to come down from that."

Joint's first performance as a drag king was with his friends Archie Called and Kanna Worm.

The night before his father died, Joint ran into local artist Poet at the former Russell Red Records. Poet offered Joint the chance to host a drag night for the Queer Night Out events hosted at the store.

"I was going through enough terribleness and it seemed like a positive note," said King.

A wonderful first hosting experience, Joint still treasures the poster.

Joint's drag mother, Jessyca Prosecco acts as a role model for Joint. She helps Joint with bookings, costumes, events, and advice. Navigating life in the queer community has its unique challenges and Joint is grateful to have Prosecco as a mentor.

With the lack of mainstream presence, drag kings have to work twice as hard as drag queens, says Joint.

There is a huge difference between Toronto's Church Street drag scene and West End drag scene, says Joint. Simply put, Church Street drag focuses on the glamour of drag, intersecting high fashion with refined makeup skills, and glamour. Joint describes West End drag as being able to push boundaries with costumes, incorporations of pop culture, and include elements of horror and comedy.

"Drag is an impersonation of gender," said King. "Any time that gender is being bent, trans people are at the frontlines 110 per cent."

Anyone can be a drag king or a drag queen, regardless of gender, says Joint.

"I play," said Joint. "I get paid to get up on stage and play."

Joint notes that Shania Twain and Gottmik are two inspirations in his life. Gottmik was the first trans man to compete on Rupaul's Drag Race. Twain was the first performer to spark Joint's drive to perform on stage.

"They mean a lot to me," said Joint. "It is huge seeing another trans man on stage."

"Seeing a trans person on TV, whether they are trans, nonbinary, a trans woman or trans man, it is something that makes you feel warm and fuzzy as a trans person," said Joint. "Just seeing someone live their life so unapologetically and so brave."

Joint has performed in bars of less than ten people, to crowds of over 400. He has performed marathon drag sets, at preschools, and even at Pride in the Highland's Burlesque Ball. Whether it is performing for children or seniors, Joint loves to see his audience having fun.

He has seen it all and will not rest, ever-improving himself as a drag performer and making every show bigger and better, with more puppets.

"I want to be the person that a little kid sees and says to themselves I can do this, things are going to be okay. Even on the dark days," said Joint.

Sandy Joint can be found with the Instagram handle @sandyjointking. His next event will be taking place on Aug. 23 at Zero Cocktail Bar in Toronto at 223 Carlton Street. Tickets are $10 and can be paid for at the door.

Lazy hazy days of summer

Haliburton Rotary held their annual Rotary Fest this past week, with cotton candy, ice cream, and of course, beef on a bun. ReMax provided their hot air balloon, with Zoo to You bringing unique creatures for kids to visit. The Drop Zone provided games for kids of all ages, and fun was had by all during the annual summer festival.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

Rotary photo submitted by David Zilstra

MVPs

It was another warm and dry week, with the grass under our soccer cleats turning crisp and brittle as a few hundred excited kids hit the pitch with energy and determination. The coaches are beginning to introduce fresh, creative, and more challenging drills designed to push these young athletes to reach new levels of skill and confidence. Each game is becoming increasingly spread out across the field, with stronger and more accurate passes, quicker transitions, and greater communication between players as they learn to read the game and work together. We cannot express enough gratitude for these incredible coaches who continue to dedicate their time, effort, and passion into developing these teams and fostering a love for the sport.

Submitted by Andrew Brown

Aleena Muneer - Girls 7-9 - Kiwi Team

Beau Gilmour - Boys 10-13 - Haliburton Crew United

Emma Dugay - Girls 10-11 - Navy Team

Huxley Brown and Cash Ouellette - Boys 7-9 - Purple Team

Delainie and McKenna Cook - Girls 7-9 - Purple Team

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To become a Grassroots Soccer sponsor contact Andrew Brown at andrew@haliburtoncrew.com

MVPs

Lily Smith and Teia Wilson - Girls 12-13 - Green Team

Ryder Williams - Boys 10-13 - Grassroot Strikers

Thomas Ritchie and Rhys Foster - Boys 7-9 - White team

Sam Hancock - Boys 10-13 - Kegel Kickers

Penelope Irvine and Kenna Ryalen - Girls 10-11 - White team

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Andrew Brown

HALIBURTON GRASSROOTS

HALIBURTON GRASSROOTS

Fire crews were already on-site in the evening on Saturday, Aug. 9 due to a forest fire east of Burnt River. /photos submitted by Ashley Smith

Wildfires threaten close communities

from page 1

Aug. 9, with 27 hectares actively burning. Aerial water support, including water bombers, continue to be at the scene. Residents and visitors are urged to avoid the Burnt River area. Fire crews and police are requesting that residents not fly drones in the area, and avoid non-essential travel.

It was noted that going against the fire ban would result in hefty fines, though propane and gas barbecues may continue to be used. While Kruger noted that there have been patches of rain in recent weeks, the downpour has been too drastic to properly soak into the soil, resulting in a continued dry spell.

The four fire chiefs will meet at least once a week while the fire ban is in place, in an effort to provide the communities with up-to-date information. At the time of press, the total fire ban is still in effect. For the most current information, visit our newspaper's websites.

Smoke from the forest fire filled the sky past Kinmount. This photo was taken out the back window of a pickup truck.

www.mindenhills.ca **In Case of Emergency Dial 911 / After-Hours Municipal Emergency Dial 1-866-856-3247**

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

August 14 – Regular Council Meeting
August 28 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

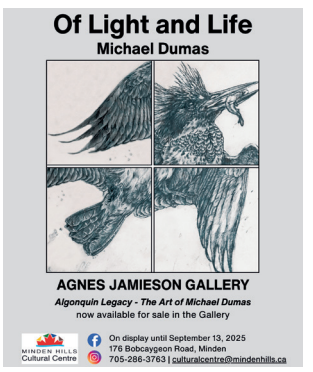
We are currently recruiting for the following vacancies:

- Casual Community Services Operator
- Seasonal Labourer
- Student Recreation Attendant
- Student Arena Attendant

Visit www.mindenhills.ca/careers for more information and how to apply

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

- *Of Light and Life*, a new exhibit by world renowned artist Michael Dumas, is on display in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery until September 13. The exhibit features over 70 original works, spanning the last 70 years. Copies of Michael's recently published book *Algonquin Legacy - The Art of Michael Dumas* are available for sale in the Gallery. For more information: https://calendar.mindenhills.ca/default/Detail/2025-07-22-1000-Of-Light-and-Life-A-Solo-Exhibition-by-Michael-Dum
- The Minden Hills Cultural Centre is pleased to partner with Pride in the Highlands for the 2nd annual Voice of Pride Art Exhibition, curated by local artist Scott Michael Walling. The exhibit will be on display from August 12 to 30. The Artist Opening Reception will be held at the on Friday, August 22 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome.
- The Minden Hills Museum and Heritage Village and Nature's Place are open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm! Daily drop-in programs are offered at 11 am. Coming up later this week: Thursday – Curious Minds (Bee Curious), Friday – Toddler Discovery Zone at 11 am and Ice-cream Making at 2 pm, Saturday – Hand Puppets. For a complete list of August programs: https://www.mindenhills.ca/en/News/media-release-25-82-august-drop-in-programs-and-activities-schedule.aspx


Of Light and Life
Michael Dumas
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On display until September 13, 2025
176 Bobcaygeon Road, Minden
705-286-3763 | culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

FALL SEASON PROGRAMS

Fall registered program registration is now open online and in person at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena. Programs include fitness classes like senior balance and buff, balance, burn as well as youth programing like creative minds and volleyball. Check out the full list of programs online at www.mindenhills.ca/recreation. collection area at Scotch Line only.

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The Dominion at 160: A community pillar for generations

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

While the busy main street of Minden today is marked by new storefronts, sidewalks and park benches, the Dominion Hotel remains a grand, central fixture of the community 160 years on.

As the town's historic hotel celebrates a milestone, innkeeper and owner Shawn Chamberlin reflects on the past and present of the iconic building and making the leap with his wife, Elli, to purchase the hotel more than 20 years ago.

"I know that Elli had never been inside and when she went inside the first time, I think she cried a little," Chamberlin said during a speaking engagement at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre last week. "Because it was not the Dominion that it is today, it was quite a place and it was certainly showing its age."

What started as a cedar shanty on the opposite side of the road from where it stands today, Daniel Buck opened the hotel in 1860 mainly to house workers who were constructing roadways in the village. Problem was, Buck opened the hotel on the dry side of Bobcaygeon Road. So, he purchased the property across the street, where the Dominion remains today.

From there, "chainsaw architects" began erecting the hotel, Chamberlin explained, adding that the building was built with balloon framing with minimal insulation.

Originally called Buck's Tavern, the hotel was renamed following one of the three fires that razed large portions of the village, Chamberlin explained.

"The hotel never was fully burned, it was saved. One time the front room was burned but the other two times it didn't get burned at all," Chamberlin explained.

That's because the hotel got special attention from firefighters and townspeople as they needed to protect the building so they would have a place to drink, Chamberlin said.

As time went on, the hotel became the heart of the town's economy and social fabric. It served as a meeting place for locals to share news and gossip over pints of beer. It was a place of warmth and conviviality, providing respite from the harsh winters and a cool retreat in the summer. While guests would come and go at the hotel throughout the years, some patrons never checked out, so the lore goes.

While Chamberlin admittedly doesn't believe in ghosts, he shared tales of restless spirits making their presence known in the hotel. From mysterious chambermaids checking in on guests (the hotel doesn't offer that kind of service), to a child standing at the top of the stairs, unexplained happenings have occurred in the building.

The innkeeper shared a story of a time when he was alone in the hotel on a brutally cold winter's night and around 1 a.m., he decided to unwind by playing a few tunes on the piano.

"I was playing away in the dining room, really starting to relax and a woman started to sing with me," Chamberlin said. "Very nice voice, she was lovely. When I stopped, she stopped. When I started, after I played a few, she would come back into the song, she was lovely. I thought somebody was playing a joke."

Chamberlin said he investigated the entire building and parking lot but the place was completely empty.

"This has happened to me more than a few times," he said. "The first time it happened, it kind of sent chills up and down your spine but now when it happens it's sort of like 'Oh hello!'"

Ghost stories aside, the Dominion Hotel, for both the community and the Chamberlins is more than just a business, it's a sense of pride and legacy.

"She feels like she's living. She gives us so many things on a daily basis," the innkeeper said. "We actually feel connected in a way that's way beyond how you would be connected with a regular business. She's part of the family.

"The Dominion is old. We feel the real responsibility to tell her stories, keeping her alive and keeping her a part of this community. Keeping her on everybody's top of mind," Chamberlin said.

For residents, the establishment stands as a reminder of the town's origins and the enduring spirit of community.

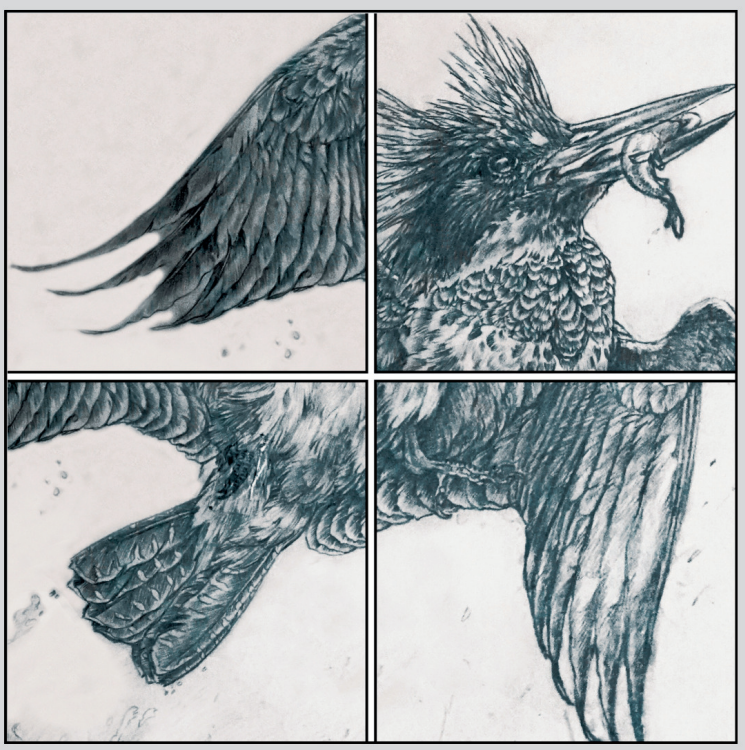
"There's a real sense of community and we have been going there since Shawn and Elli opened it," Minden resident Wayne Rose said. "We feel welcomed there and Shawn and Elli are just fantastic. I feel a lot of us here meet there and we see each other and thank God they put the effort into it because we would be in sad shape if Minden didn't have the Dominion."

Minden's Kathie Porter echoed Rose's comments saying the Dominion Hotel "really is a drawing spot for a lot of people."

Hot and hazy

The Gull River has seen plenty of action this summer with the ongoing heatwaves, with swimmers grabbing their river tubes and floating down the winding river. /ADAM FRISK staff

Of Light and Life
Michael Dumas



AGNES JAMIESON GALLERY
Algonquin Legacy - The Art of Michael Dumas
now available for sale in the Gallery

MINDEN HILLS Cultural Centre

On display until September 13, 2025
176 Bobcaygeon Road, Minden
705-286-3763 | culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca

Wild in Wilberforce

The Wilberforce Agricultural Fair welcomed hundreds to the community this past weekend, with a corn hole tournament, a pie eating contest, a petting zoo, crafts and games for the whole family, and so much more. According to their website, it is the mission of the Wilberforce Agricultural Society to provide a family oriented, kid-friendly, volunteer-rich, fun, affordable, hands-on, memorable summer event with a glimpse of times past. /TIM YANO staff photographer

StreetFest sets the stage for Pride

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

It's a signature event for the county, but this year, Pride in the Highlands will be bigger and better than ever.

This year's week of celebrations is slated for Aug. 18 to 24, and according to co-chair of Pride in the Highlands, Allan Guinan, preparations have been going well. "We wanted to make this year a little different," he said. "So we consciously spread the week out a bit, changed a few things, and added others."

With flag raisings, documentary screenings, Drag Story Times, art exhibits, and dance opportunities, the week is jam-packed. "We are trying to continue our legacy events," said Guinan, "while also trying to include some new elements. We are constantly trying to evolve."

The week culminates on Sunday, Aug. 24 with the well-known Rainbow Streetfest. "We've taken a deep dive with Streetfest this year and we're bringing in a stage," said Guinan.

In the past, the event has featured games, artisanal and food vendors, live music, and shopping opportunities. This year, all the previous features will still be present, but the addition of a stage and live performers will elevate the experience as a whole.

With a number of drag artists performing, as well as Taylor Abrahamse and headliner Dani Doucette, Guinan hopes that the free festival will attract a larger crowd.

Because while the organizers do not turn a profit for these events, there is the hope that the festival will encourage everyone to feel welcome, feel safe, feel supported. "That's the goal," said Guinan. "To make sure everyone is absolutely welcome."

With past numbers hovering around 1,000 attendees, Guinan is cognizant of the need for increased security at the event, to ensure the safety and protection for attendees. He also noted a need for volunteers to participate. "Our volunteer numbers are low this year," he said. "I think people assume that it's the same people that will continue to help out, but that's not always the case."

If you are interested in volunteering with any part of the week-long festival, visit prideinthehighlands.ca.

Beyond celebrating the diversity of the Haliburton Highlands, the volunteer organization hopes to showcase the local talent through their avenues. "We want to promote the talents of the people from our community," said Guinan, "and to use our festival as a platform for people."

Rainbow Streetfest kicks off at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 24. At 11:30, the annual parade down the Gull River in floats will take place, with a festival wrap party at Boshkung Social in Minden.

For the full Pride in the Highlands lineup, visit prideinthehighlands.ca.

Ella, left, and Maya Szathmary toss beanbags at a past StreetFest. /FILE

Voice of Pride returns for second year

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

On Aug. 22, the Minden Hills Cultural Centre will be hosting the opening artist reception of the *Voice of Pride* exhibition from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This year marks the second year in a row for the event. Curated by local artist Scott Michael Walling and organized in collaboration with Pride in the Highlands, the reception offers a unique opportunity to highlight and celebrate queer artists as a community.

With an open call for artist's submissions in July, Walling accepted pieces from over a dozen artists. Some artists even have multiple pieces, as long as they are unique in their own way, like using a different medium. Walling describes the event as a variety show, with something beautiful for everyone to find and connect with.

While Walling says that artists with a local connection are preferred, they are not strict with their requirements. Artists of all skill levels participate in this exhibition. Artists are also allowed to display their work anonymously, if they wish to conceal their identity.

"Anyone can have a connection," said Walling. "Whether that being that you have a friend that lives here, you have visited, or you like Haliburton County. I am not looking for submissions from Edmonton, when they have never been to Haliburton County."

Walling recalls one professor who taught him that there is great power to ink. With art like posters, change can be made. He hopes that the *Voice of Pride* exhibition will inspire change and allow queer voices to be heard and acknowledged. Historically, many artists chose to conceal their sexuality from the public. With *Voice of Pride*, they are meant to be fully on display.

"I think it is a way for people to understand that this is how queer people might have a voice and use it for change, self expression, or processing emotions and feelings," said Walling.

There are enormous hurdles for artists wanting to show their work, says Walling. When an artist's works do not sell, it is very disheartening after putting so much time and effort into your pieces. Many of the artworks at the exhibition will be available to purchase, with the funds directly supporting the artist.

"I hope more artists put work in," said Walling. In the future, he hopes to bring the *Voice of Pride* exhibition to The Space, his own gallery in Haliburton.

"Last year we had so much positive feedback for the show," said Walling.

Walling says that people will approach him to say how much they enjoyed the show. The exhibition is open to the public and is for everyone to enjoy.

"I hope to inspire the people that want to take part in these things," said Walling. "People can see themselves in the work and in other people."

Voice of Pride will be on display in the Welch Room of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre from Aug. 12 to Aug. 30. The opening reception on Aug. 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. will have a variety of refreshments, food, and interesting artworks on display.

This year's Voice of Pride Artist Reception will be taking place on Aug. 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. /Submitted

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HALIBURTON LAKE SELF STORAGE

The dirt on yurts

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Last year, the Ontario government invested $375,000 in building three new yurts at Silent Lake Provincial Park. The new infrastructure was intended to increase the opportunities for overnight camping experiences, improve visitor experience and boost tourism within the area.

The Ontario government has invested over $900,000 to improve infrastructure at Silent Lake Provincial Park since 2018.

For those who have never seen a yurt, they are structured tents with canvas walls and wooden support to keep the structure together. Originating in Central Asia, yurts exploded in popularity in Mongolia. In the writings of Marco Polo, yurts were even seen around the courts of Kublai Khan, first Emperor of the Yuan dynasty of China.

Humans have been yurting for over 200 years. In that time, the concept has not changed.

The three yurts replaced three that showed signs of heavy wear and tear, says Brent Stewart, Silent Lake Park Superintendent. The replacement yurts feature a skylight, log furniture, and expanded deck areas.

"The replacement yurts will allow visitors to enjoy all the beauty and nature of an Ontario Park without having to bring much gear or sleep in a tent," said Stewart. "For those that are new to camping and want to stay at a park without having to invest in equipment, yurts are a great option. These options are also great for dedicated summer campers who want to try visiting in the colder months and who might prefer the warmth of a yurt for their first winter camping trip."

As part of their roofed accommodation options, Stewart says that the yurts are booked up in advance for most of the year.

In 2024, Silent Lake Provincial Park saw 100,000 visitors. Stewart says that number is increasing every year.

Visitors to Silent Lake come for the hiking trails, fishing, swimming, mountain biking, paddling, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing. Yurts provide the perfect shelter for adventure campers looking to get outdoors during the winter months.

Stewart would like to point out that Silent Lake has 19 kilometres of hiking trails, 17 kilometres of mountain biking trails, a beautiful looking point to view Silent Lake, a motor ban preserving the lake and its waters, and two sandy beaches for visitors to enjoy.

"Fall is a great time to visit Silent Lake," said Stewart. "With fewer crowds, late fall is a great time to spot wildlife that call Silent Lake home. It is also a great time of year to hit the trails. Whether you're looking for a beautiful short hike with family or are an experienced hiker looking for a full day's outing Silent Lake's trails are the perfect way to connect with nature."

With the overwhelming demand for camping in their yurts, Stewart recommends booking early. Bookings can be made five months in advance through ontarioparks.ca.

Schoolhouse Rock

Blackbird Pottery in Gelert hosted their annual Schoolhouse pop-up show the first weekend of August, featuring artists specializing paint, pottery, jewellery, and textiles. The annual event draws hundreds to the pioneer schoolhouse, and offers locals and visitors a glimpse into the eclectic art scene of the Haliburton Highlands. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Get your feet ready for Out on the Street

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Get your dancing shoes ready for Saturday, Aug. 23 for the first Out on the Street Line Dancing event, presented by Dance Happens Here (DH3), The River Cone, and Pride in the Highlands.

DH3 is a local, volunteer run community-based organization that strives to provide opportunities to engage and watch contemporary and traditional dancing in the Haliburton Highlands.

"I love watching dancing," said Myra Stephen, committee member for DH3. "All dances of all forms. Dancing is very joyful."

This year's Rainbow Streetfest will be taking place on Aug. 24. This Out on the Street Line Dancing event is part of Pride in the Highlands' Pride Week that runs from Aug. 18 to 24, a week long celebration that offers events all week long.

Local dance instructor Jacqui Bell will be leading participants in a variety of simple to learn dance moves that will get people moving, shaking and grooving.

In the past, DH3 has offered a salsa night, a Diwali event, and dance in the Haliburton Sculpture Forest.

"We like presenting dances of all kinds," said Stephen. "Giving people the chance to experience things that they might not have before."

The organization saw the Pride Week celebrations as the perfect opportunity for them to collaborate with Pride in the Highlands, as well as The River Cone itself.

"The River Cone is such a great venue for the community and families," said Stephen. "People can dance. They can eat. They can play on the playground. They can even float to the event if they want to."

The event runs from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Aug. 23 and Stephen says that participants are welcomed to join in, leave, and come back as much as they want. There is also no fee to participate in the dancing event.

As a part of the Pride Week celebrations, the event will feature music and choreography created by 2SLGBTQ+ artists. Some artists that have been discussed include Elton John and Orville Peck.

Bell, a resident of West Guilford, is graciously donating her time and knowledge to the event. The fee that would have gone to the instructor will be used towards their bursary at Skyline Dance Studio, to support a youth wanting to dance from the local area. DH3 will be collecting donations if anyone chooses to support their programming and bursary.

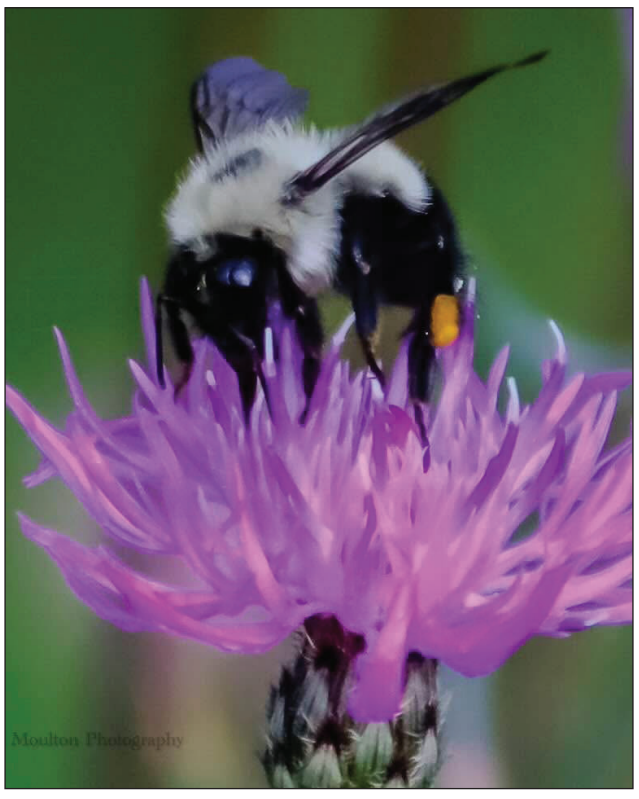
Stephen says that some of Bell's students will also be in attendance and may show off some of their moves and assist with teaching moves to others.

The River Cone also plans on offering special Pride-themed offerings for the event.

"I expect lots of smiles, some sweat, and people having fun together," said Stephen.

DH3 is a member of the Haliburton Community Co-Operative and receives funding from the Government of Canada. For more information on how you can get involved or see upcoming events, please visit dancehappenshere.com.

The Minden River Cone is located at 119 Bobcaygeon Road and the line dancing will be taking place along a portion of Orde Street.



Bumblebee by Jill Moulton

'The kids' by Debi Ireland

Call For Artwork:
Pump It Up Project

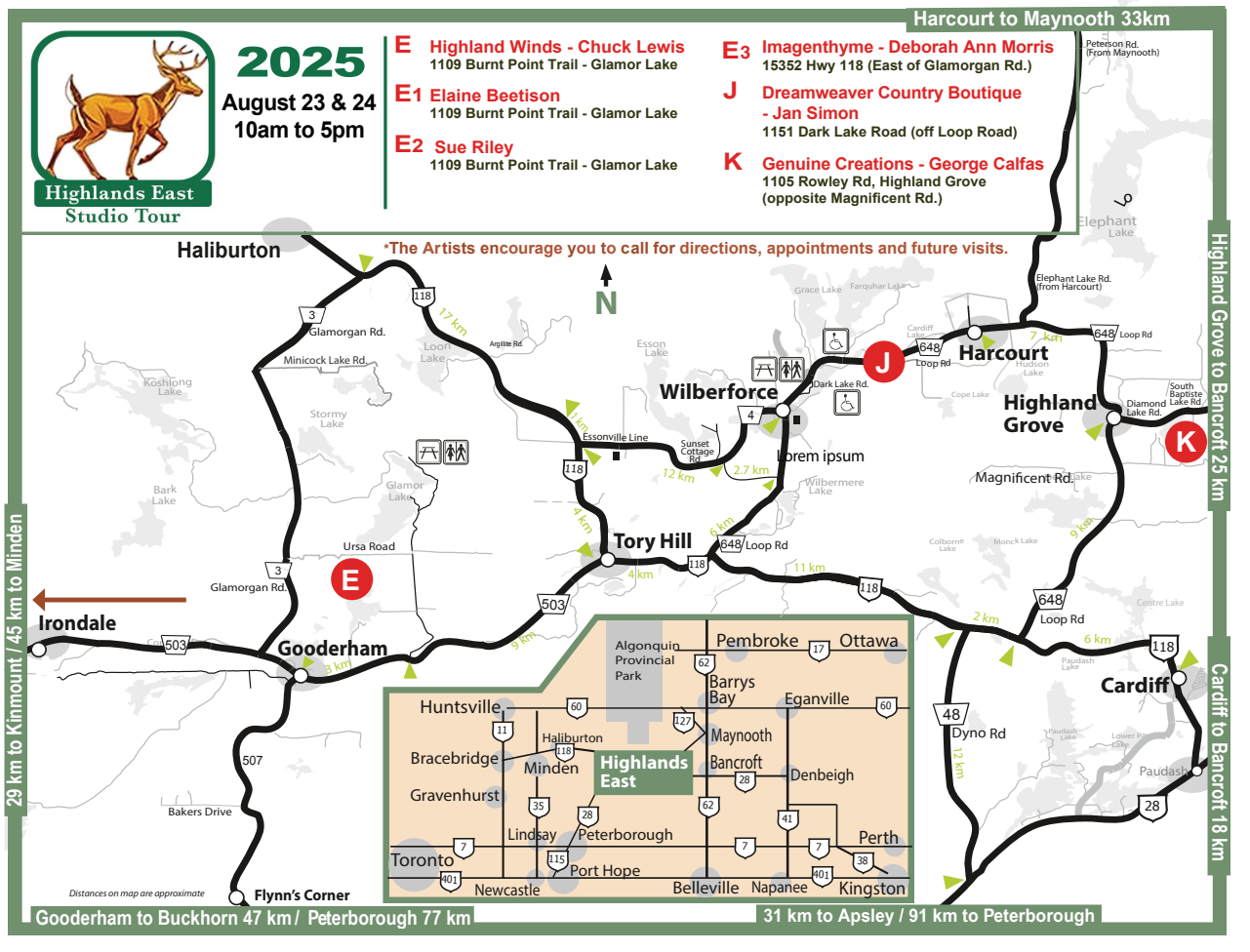
Dysart et al Cultural Resources Committee is calling out to artists to submit 2D visual artwork, either existing or new, to be used as images for vinyl wraps for sewage pumping stations located in the Village of Haliburton.

Award of $400 per artwork selected.
Theme: Nature and the Outdoors.
Submission deadline: Friday, August 22, 2025

Details and link to submission form
www.dysartetal.ca/pumpitup

The Municipality of DYSART ET AL
In the Heart of the Haliburton Highlands

Questions:
dysartpumpitupproject@gmail.com



Local tattoo artists follow their dream to Haliburton

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Local tattoo artists Bronwin Ironside and Samina "Hamster Hands" Khokhar have been settling well into their studio space at 83 Maple Avenue.

The duo first moved into their location in Minden in October 2022. After nearly three years of tattooing in Minden, the duo sought a larger space to operate from.

"We have been working really hard," said Ironside.

Visiting their studio beside Snaffle and Mane makes you feel like home. Just as their previous location, the walls are decorated with their personal touches of mirrors, chandeliers, artwork, tattoo flash sheets, and pops of colour.

While the square footage of the studio is similar, Ironside says that the space is better for their business due to the way that the space is broken up. In Minden, their business was split between two floors. In Haliburton, their new studio location offers high ceilings, a sterilization room, and a guest room. The open floor plan offers itself up to conversation and collaboration.

"The layout is more conducive to what we do," said Ironside. "Tattooing is very community based. It is kind of like if you invite your family over for supper you are not going to make them go eat in the guest room on the other side of the house. You want to be amongst one another."

At max capacity, Ironside says that their new location could allow up to five tattoo artists working at once.

"Right when we saw it, we knew we wanted to do something different," said Khokhar.

The duo has already noticed that there is more foot traffic past their shop's window and the traffic through the downtown core has increased visitors to their business. Accessibility of Haliburton through Highway 21 and the need for residents to visit the village for things like the grocery store has increased their business's visibility.

"It was nice to be able to walk to work for a little while," said Khokar. Before moving the business to Haliburton, Khokhar and her partner purchased a home in Minden to be closer to her business. Ironside says that she will miss her close proximity to the River Cone the most.

Ironside and Khokhar's reputations and clientele have increased since moving their operations to Haliburton County.

"If you do your best every time, your work speaks for itself," said Ironside. "If you treat people with kindness and respect and always do the best job you possibly can and people see that, it brings in work for you."

One client in particular visited Ironside in between her breast cancer chemo treatments. "She specifically went out of her way to schedule a bunch of tattoo appointments before she went back on chemo," said Ironside. "That was really humbling, to know that our relationship was important enough to her to fit that into a small window of her life."

With their newly renovated space, the duo cannot wait to have guest tattoo artists visit. While they are still adding some finishing touches like their flying mermaid and unpacking boxes, both artists continue to meet clients and tattoo beautiful artworks on their body.

The process of moving to their Haliburton Studio took around four weeks. The duo painted every square inch, changed the lighting, and did both tiling and plumbing, all while tattooing full-time.

"Home is who you surround yourself with," said Ironside. "In this space, we certainly feel at home. We have worked together for eight years now, because we work well together, we work well in any space that we are in."

Ironside says that she really loves how art-centric the community of Haliburton is, especially with its various festivals and selection of performances. Khokhar says that she loves walking along the downtown strip.

"It is our dream job," said Khokhar.

In the future, the pair hope to offer walk-in tattoos and to have a fundraising event for the local YWCA.

Samina Khokhar, of Latitude Tattoo's Instagram handle is @latitudetattoo and Bronwin Ironside of B. Ironside Art's Instagram handle is @b.ironside.art.

Magic in Minden

Minden Rotary hosted their annual Rotary Fest this past weekend, and despite sizzling temperatures, the event saw a large turn-out in the downtown core. With a vintage car show, live music, programs and games for kids of all ages, and lots of local deals, the event was a success for all. Below, musician Drew Allen performs at Minden Rotary Fest. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Aria races a minnow.

Maive paints flowers with her grandmother at Minden Rotary Fest on Saturday, Aug. 9.

H.A.V.E. tees up for fifth Ron Reid Memorial Golf Tournament

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Help a Village Effort (H.A.V.E.) is preparing to host their annual Ron Reid Memorial Golf Tournament. This year marks the fifth iteration of the event in memory of Reid.

Since 1982, H.A.V.E. has been drilling artesian wells in India. Ever since the charity's inception, it has been entirely voluntary, with no paid personnel, no office space, and no equipment. All funds that are raised go directly towards their projects efforts or their bookkeeping. While starting originally as an inter-church organization, H.A.V.E. prides itself as simply being a community based organization that recognizes the basic humanitarian needs people have, regardless of faith or nationality.

Every well that is created allows around 600 to 1,000 individuals to have access to clean drinking water, a sanitization system, filtration system, and the ability to cook food. H.A.V.E. has four NGO organizations that they work with in India to install the wells. Every NGO is properly vetted, with proposals and checking with the banking system. Each well costs around $2,500 and are life-changers for every community that receives them, says Michele Coneybeare chairperson for H.A.V.E..

Their organization tries to focus their efforts on installing wells near schools. In particular, they hope to support young girls that can focus more of their time towards getting an education, rather than spending hours collecting water for their families.

Last year, H.A.V.E.'s Ron Reid Memorial golf tournament raised over $22,000 dollars. This year, Coneybeare hopes to beat that record.

Golfers ready themselves to kick off the Ron Reid Memorial Golf Tournament. /submitted

With space for 64 golfers, the wait-list for the Ron Reid Memorial Tournament is a hot commodity, says Coneybeare.

Reid, a long-time resident of Minden, is still remembered for his kindness and ability to welcome others with open arms. In 1976, working as a freshwater lakes biologist with the Dorset Research Centre, Reid found himself and his young family moving to Haliburton County. Reid volunteered with H.A.V.E. for nearly 40 years, even becoming chairperson in 1998.

Coneybeare says that it is an honour hosting the golf tournament in Reid's memory.

She says that H.A.V.E. always feels adequately supported through the generosity of the community and the businesses in the county.

"We know it is a small community and businesses are asked all the time to donate things," said Coneybeare. Despite the pressure, businesses and Minden's community have always stepped up to support them.

In addition to the annual golf tournament, H.A.V.E. also hosts an annual Walk for Water and receives donations through yearly donors. H.A.V.E. has also spread across Canada, with Walk for Water events taking place in Ontario, Newfoundland, and British Columbia.

With six board members, Coneybeare says that the organization is always looking for highly motivated, active members.

In the future, you may notice their updated website, which was created by My Portal Marketing.

The organization has four sponsorship levels from Bronze ($250) to Buy a Well ($2,500). Donations are also accepted through e-transfer using the email address HAVE@helpavillageeffort.org.

The Ron Reid Charity Golf Tournament takes place at the Gull River Golf Club on Aug. 14, with registration starting at 8 a.m.

"People are going out to have fun," said Coneybeare.

Environment Haliburton! hosts EV show

Environment Haliburton! hosted an electric vehicle show at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School on Saturday, where a variety of EVs were on display. The show featured Lakelands EV Charging and guest speakers who talked about the vehicles, the misinformation around them and how EVs play a key role in having a near zero carbon society by 2050. /ADAM FRISK staff

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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2	8	3	6	4	1	7	5	9
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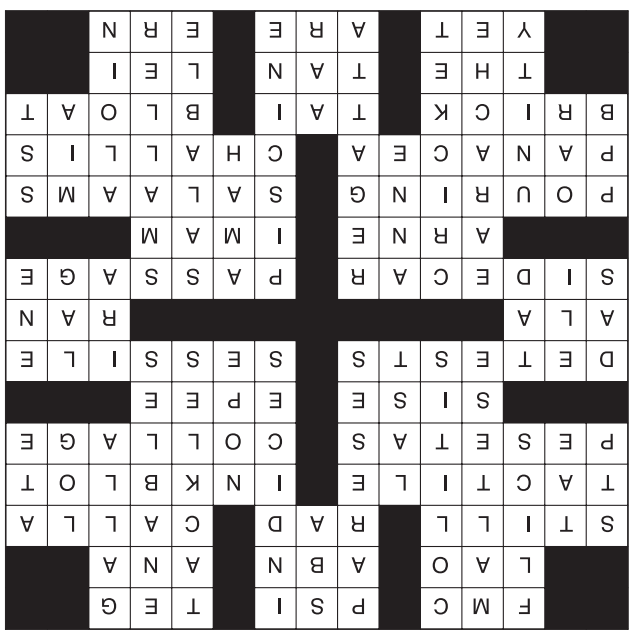
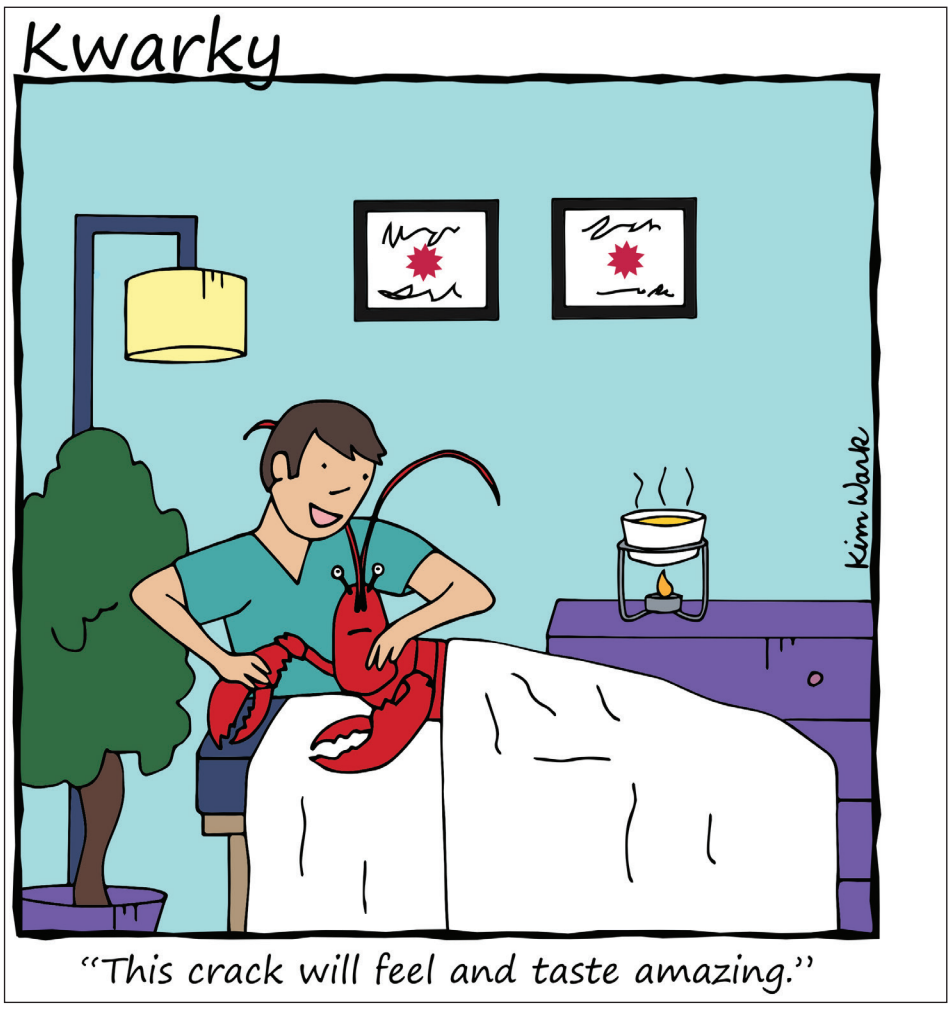
CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Miller Simpson poses for a photo while sitting inside an electric vehicle.



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SUDOKU

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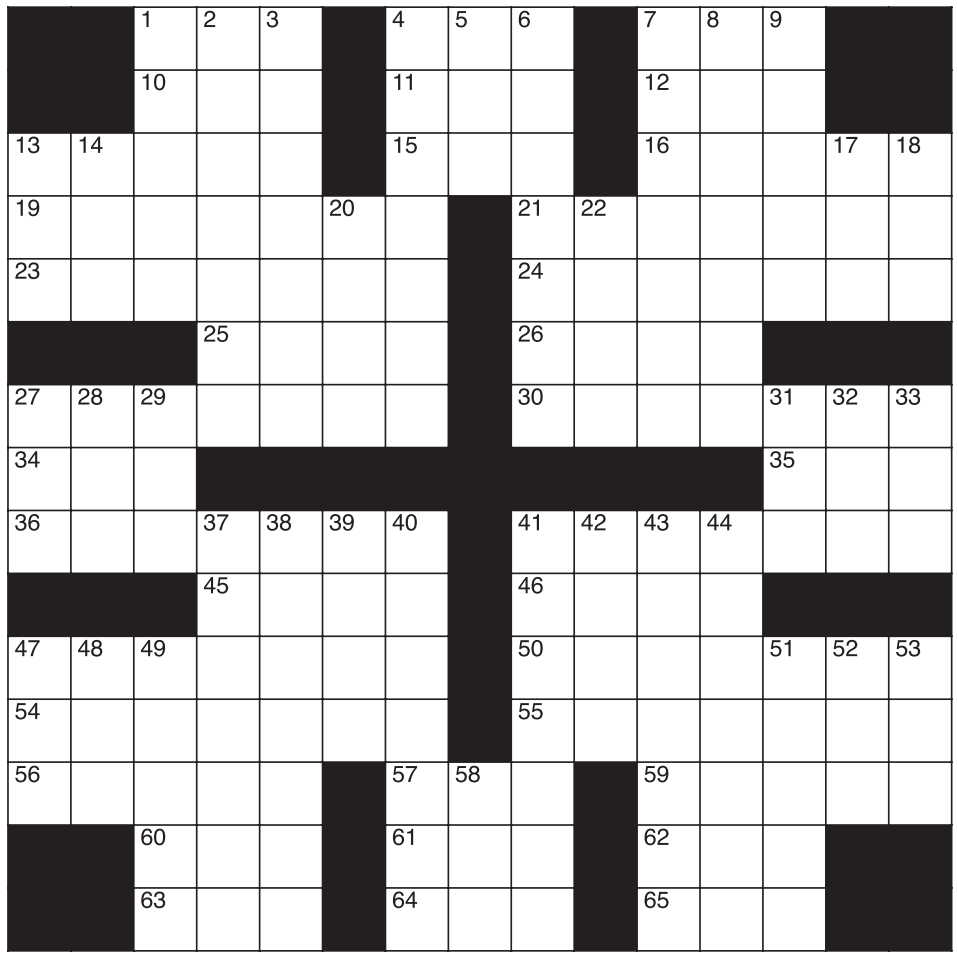
Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 25



CLUES ACROSS
1. Auto manufacturer
4. The 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet
7. Two-year-old sheep
10. Member of indigenous people in Asia
11. Airborne (abbr.)
12. Actress de Armas
13. Not moving
15. Cool!
16. Plants of the arum family
19. Perceptible by touch
21. Rorschach test
23. Monetary units
24. Art
25. Cardinal number
26. Dueling sword
27. Hates
30. Fixed in one place
34. Pie _ __ mode
35. Moved on foot
36. Passenger's spot on a motorcycle
41. A way through
45. "Rule, Britannia" composer
46. Leader
47. Flowing
50. Common greetings in Arabic countries
54. Solution for all difficulties
55. Soft clothing fabric
56. Building material
57. Sea bream
59. A way to cause to be swollen
60. One and only
61. Skin color
62. Wreath
63. Nevertheless
64. They __
65. Sea eagle

CLUES DOWN
1. Policemen (French)
2. Toy dog
3. Inflamed colon disease
4. Muscular weaknesses
5. Helps little firms
6. References
7. Takes down
8. Facilitates
9. One-time empress of the Roman Empire
13. Engine additive
14. Chemistry solution
17. Written account
18. Consumed
20. Coming after all others
22. No (slang)
27. Government lawyers
28. Super Bowl winner Manning
29. Small amount
31. A way to save for your future
32. A way to travel behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Head pain
38. Loud lawn insect
39. Actress Hathaway
40. Boat race
41. About fish
42. Nursemaid in India
43. Marketable
44. Tinier
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Paddle
49. Oneness
51. Bitter compound
52. Not around
53. Very fast airplane
58. Swiss river

Answers on page 25

Feeling Buble

Jay Davis performed a tribute to Michael Buble to wrap up a successful season with the Highlands Summer Festival this past weekend. The jazzy show incorporated Michael Buble classics and covers, and had the audience cheering the band on. The Summer Festival board is already planning the 2026 season, in light of the success from this past season.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

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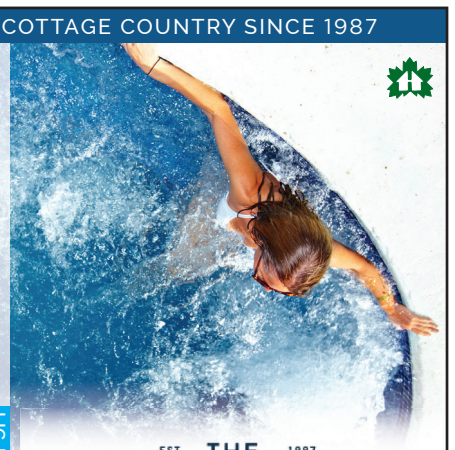

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MNR gives more time to consider fish policy

by SUE BACHNER
Staff Reporter

While it's good news to some that the Ministry of Natural Resources has decided to give the public more time to consider the Natural Trout Management Strategy, there's still a sense of skepticism about the outcome.

"We have to be conservative on one hand, but we also must be careful not to hurt the local economy," says Dan Buhl, local representative for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

MNR's strategy is to protect naturally-producing Brook and Lake Trout. In public reviews held last month, the Ministry suggested that stocking the lakes that naturally produce these breeds of fish should stop because it has resulted in a less healthy breed. New stocking guidelines and fishing restrictions have been suggested.

Limiting the size of fish that can be removed from the water and banning of live bait are among some of the suggestions that have local politicians and businesspersons worried about the economic impact of the proposal.

MNR originally gave the public until August 10 to respond to a questionnaire, but due to widespread concerns about the lack of advertising of public forums, and little time to consider the pros and cons of such a strategy, the Ministry has agreed to extend the deadline to September 23.

"That's good news," says Dysart et al Councillor Murray Fearrey. "It will give people a chance to respond." Through letters to the editor in local newspapers and more public discussion, there will be more awareness in the county before final decisions are made.

Buhl says that the timing of the proposal was not opportune, with so many on holidays. "It's good common sense that they set a new date."

Anson, Hindon and Minden reeve Bern Berry is also pleased to see the Ministry has given the public more time, but is still not satisfied with the way it approached the strategy in the first place. "I still don't think the meetings were well advertised...I don't say I read the papers front

Please turn to page 2

Hospitals warn public:

■ Patients might need HIV test

by SUE BACHNER
Staff Reporter

From 1978 to 1985, at a time when the letters HIV were not yet familiar enough to stand alone, blood donors across Canada were not screened for infection. As a result, the odds of finding out that a blood donor infected you with HIV – the virus that causes AIDS – are one in 14,000 according to the Canadian Red Cross Society.

In a province-wide attempt to track down the blood recipients from this period, Peterborough and Haliburton County Hospitals opened a three-week hotline in July for anyone who thought they might have received a blood transfusion at any of the four hospitals. By the end of the three weeks, 908 people called the hotline, which was advertised in local newspapers.

Approximately two percent of the calls came from the Haliburton County area, says Tanya Stewart, co-ordinator of public relations at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Centre in Peterborough. There were no requests from callers who thought they had a transfusion at either Haliburton or Minden Hospital.

Hospital personnel determine if individuals received blood during those years by doing a manual search of transfusion records. If the person had received blood, it is up to the family physician to notify the patient. "It's still the person's prerogative if they want the (HIV) test done," whether the person did or did not receive blood during that period, says Stewart.

Testing for HIV is a simple procedure. It's free and virtually painless – all that is needed is a teaspoon of blood that is driven to a provincial lab. The results go back to the family physician as soon as they are available.

"This isn't a scare tactic," says Stewart, of the newspaper ads. "It's to make people aware this has been identified as a problem."

Although the risk is minimal according to Canadian Red Cross Society's statistics, it's still an issue to be looked at. Once a person has been infected with HIV, it can take at least 10 years for AIDS symptoms to appear. In the mean time, the individual could be infecting sexual partners or a fetus. Tracking down blood recipients could be one way of reducing the spread of AIDS.

The general public commonly

Please turn to page 2.

All eyes on the ball

On Sunday night, the staff of Minden IGA went bat-to-bat against the staff of Haliburton IGA. It soom became clear that the Minden team had the superior hitting power, with players often hitting the ball over the fence at the Dysart ball diamond. Here, Blair Johnson, Adam McMartin, Tim Robinson, Rick Mallette, Kelly Dollo, Nicki Dollo and Andy Bacon watch a teammate's ball soar. Each team is donating $100 to the Minden food bank, the charity chosen by the winning Minden team. There are more game pictures on page 8.

OPP busy with car accidents

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

After a relatively quiet summer on the roads, the Minden OPP was certainly kept busy last week.

The biggest accident involved an 80,000-pound roll of rubber, which rolled right off a tractor trailer on Hwy 35 across from Kushog Lake on Wednesday afternoon.

The rubber was enroute from a Goodyear plant in Bowmanville to a factory in Alberta. It is to be used as a conveyor belt. Because the load was so high, it was travelling up Hwy 35 where there are few bridges or overhangs.

Driver Lloyd Magrum of Alberta was northbound on the highway when he rounded a corner and his truck jackknifed. The rubber fell off the trailer and the jackknifed truck continued up the highway for about 80 metres.

"Luckily no one was hurt," says Minden OPP communications officer Mike Landry. It is not known why the truck jackknifed.

The rubber landed against a rock cut on the east side of the highway.

The truck and trailer were

Please turn to page 2

School teaches new meaning of success

by SUE BACHNER
Staff Reporter

Summer school. If you have never been in the Highlands, chances are the meaning of this term would be slanted slightly toward the derogatory. But if you have ever heard the word spoken in this area of the province, you know there's definitely something different about the response it receives here.

Shortly after Haliburton Highlands Secondary School students have emptied their lockers in June, people literally flock through the school's corridors and into the classrooms to learn how to sculpt, paint, carve, quilt, weave, sew, or learn from a professional milliner.

A milliner? If you don't know what that is, you haven't attended one of the new art classes at the Sir Sandford Fleming School of Fine Arts. Millinery is hat making, and it is one of the progam additions that has taken off to a popular start.

The School of Fine Arts has been able to spread its wings into other areas this year, all of which have received terrific responses. Art therapy has attracted a wide market of learners among social service professionals, such as teachers and psychotherapists. But the most popular courses are still watercolour painting, pottery and life drawing, says principal Barb Bolin.

About two-thirds of the classes have been filled to capacity, and many people have decided to spend the entire summer in classes rather than taking in one or two of the weekly workshops. At 2,750 students, enrollment is up 10 percent this year.

"We've had lots of interesting people coming in," Bolin says. What has impressed her most this year is the number of advanced artists registering.

"In one class of 15, six of them were art school graduates from Ontario and three graduated from art schools in Europe." Next summer she plans to cater to this advanced market more than in the past.

"One of the other things that we've seen at the school is a lot of our teachers coming back and taking courses, and that's something they've never done before."

Also, more elementary school teachers than ever have been trying to develop hands-on artistic skills that they can offer in their own classrooms.

After just one week of learning, students are leaving the corridors with a new masterpiece they created themselves. But before they leave with it you can look over some of their work in its final stages. Each Thursday afternoon starting at 4 p.m., after classes end, the public is invited to Haliburton Highlands Secondary School for a walk-about.

FINE ART: Robert Bradshaw and Trisha Langley from Bracebridge watch as Nikki Young demonstrates what she learned last week in a weaving workshop at Sir Sandford Fleming's School of Fine Arts.

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Remember Me Quilts relocates

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Allison Mallette has reopened her store Remember Me Quilts at 8021 Highway 35 in Norland. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Remember Me Quilts is a staple to the local quilting community. Even beyond Haliburton County, Allison Mallette's store has customers that pilgrimage from places like Bracebridge, Peterborough, and Bobcaygeon. Last month, her store had to relocate to Norland.

When the building that housed her business sold, she was notified by the new owner that they had intent to take over the space for their own real estate business.

"It was a shock," said Mallette. "My understanding from the landlord was that everybody was staying."

Mallette frantically searched for a suitable space. She viewed storefronts in Minden, Haliburton, and Kinmount but was unable to find a suitable place to house her quilting services and fabric supply store.

Finally, she found a retail space at 8021 Highway 35, just down the road from the Wessell's big red barn. When heading north from downtown Norland, her store is a 10 minute hop, skip, and jump, down the highway.

When she left Minden, she put a sign in her window thanking Minden for six great years.

Tucked in behind the Sub and Sandwich Factory, her sign cannot be seen from the road. Her entrance is a small door along the side of the building. Some may know it as the former location of Calder's Antiques.

Mallette says that she is already having issues with not being allowed to erect a sign to advertise her business. With issues around zoning and the road allowance for the highway, she is concerned that she will be charged if she puts a sign out.

During our interview, every customer that comes in mentions to Mallette that they had a hard time finding the shop.

For now, she relies on word of mouth, people calling the store, and updating her Facebook page when she is able to. Fortunately, Mallette says that she continues to see most of her regulars at the new location.

Mallette says that she has learned her lesson when it comes to renovating rental spaces. Despite half a decade of improvements and paying for extra fixtures, Mallette was unable to take what she had paid for, with her.

Her new storefront in Norland is 1,800 square feet. With her selection of fabrics, a long arming machine, and tables to host classes, Mallette says that 1,800 square feet is simply too much space. She says that she only needs around 1,000 square feet and assures her customers that her current location is only temporary.

There is light at the end of the tunnel for Mallette. Two units over from her current location, the Coboconk Food Bank is waiting for the wellness centre to be built. Once complete, Mallette will be moving into unit number six. Mallette is hoping that the space will be available in the fall, but is cognizant that there may be delays with the build.

Having a classroom space to teach quilting and sewing has been a dream of Mallette. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she prepared a space for teaching, but in-person restrictions lead her to use the space for storage.

In particular, Mallette hopes to use her teaching space to educate children about quilting and sewing. She is even encouraging young people to reach out to her to learn how to sew.

In all her years of running the business, Mallette says that the most important aspect is customer service.

"Customer service is key, a priority," said Mallettte. "You answer the phone, you get back to people, and you listen to people."

"This is something that I love," said Mallette. "You are sharing a joy that somebody else has joy in."

With the current trend towards boycotting American-made goods, Mallette says that she has made a point by sourcing Canadian products. While more expensive, she says that being pro-Canada helps with our Canadian identity and keeps money in our country.

Mallette says that she strives to keep her prices as low as possible, even with the chagrin of other quilting stores.

"I am offering people the ability to do something within their means," said Mallette. "Maybe the break in the cost will help them become more involved and that may become a career for them."

Remember Me Quilts is located at 8021 Highway 35 in Norland. The store is open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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